



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
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March 19, 2019

Board of Supervisors  
800 S. Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation of Supervisor Bennett to Direct the Planning Division to Revise The Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance to Enable Bee Keeping in Residential Zones

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Direct the Planning Division to revise The Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance to enable bee keeping in residential zones.

**DISCUSSION:**

As our Board recently heard from the County Agricultural Commissioner, bees are beneficial insects that perform the critical function of plant pollination which is essential for the life cycle of most native, agricultural, and ornamental trees and plants. We additionally heard that bee colonies and populations are in decline in California and nationally, which could potentially threaten the future of plant life as we know it. Bees also produce comestible and useful products including honey, pollen, and bee's wax.

Many older zoning ordinances prohibit keeping bee hives in residential zones, ours included. Backyard bee keeping as a hobby has become increasingly popular, with participants citing the support of bee populations and the production of fresh honey as attributes. Many cities and counties have revised their zoning ordinances to allow limited bee keeping with appropriate standards in residential zones. The City of Ojai's beekeeping ordinance section is attached as an example. Ojai reports that no problems have been reported from backyard bee keeping, and a literature search indicates that this is generally the case nationally. Backyard bee keeping would be particularly in keeping with the rural, agricultural nature of the County unincorporated area.

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Conversations with the County Planning Director indicate that this minor Zoning Ordinance amendment could likely be combined with other pending amendments that will be brought forward to the Planning Commission and Board later this year with minimal workflow impact. I would respectfully encourage approval of the recommended action.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Bennett".

Steve Bennett,  
Supervisor, First District

Attachment: Ojai Beekeeping Ordinance